AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

What is claimed is:

1-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method for mechanically assisting the pumping action of the heart, comprising the steps of:

providing a catheter having a proximal end, a distal end, a distal region, a first balloon attached in the distal region, a second balloon attached in the distal region distal the first balloon, and a third balloon attached in the distal region distal the second balloon;

advancing the distal end of the catheter into the aorta;

sequentially inflating the first balloon, the second balloon, and the third balloon during diastole, to propagate blood flow retrograde to the coronary arteries and the carotid arteries; and

sequentially deflating the third balloon[[,]] and the second balloon~~, and the first balloon~~ during the ejection phase of the left ventricle to propagate blood flow antegrade, wherein the pumping action of the heart is mechanically assisted.

30-73. (Canceled)

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the catheter further comprises a fourth balloon attached in the distal region distal the third balloon.

75. (Canceled)

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the first, second, and third balloons are inflated with a gas.

77. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the gas is carbon dioxide.

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the first, second, and third balloons have a volume of between 10–30 cc.

79. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of repeating the steps of sequentially inflating the first, second, and third balloons and sequentially deflating the third[[,]] and second~~, and first~~ balloons.

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the catheter is placed so that the first, second, and third balloons are positioned in the descending aorta.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the first, second, and third balloons are inflated to fully obstruct the aorta.

82. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 29, wherein the first, second, and third balloons are inflated to partially obstruct the aorta.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, further comprising the steps of measuring an electrocardiogram and synchronizing inflation of the balloons with the R wave of the electrocardiogram, so that maximum inflation occurs at the peak of the T wave, and deflation of the balloons is timed to occur just before the next QRS complex of the electrocardiogram.

84-111. (Canceled)